Acquisition of agricultural land for setting up of SEZ's

420. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the farmers in the country are vehemently opposed to SEZs;

(b) whether Government is very keen on acquiring tracts of agricultural land for establishing industries in spite of their oppositions; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA): (a) to (c) Land is a State subject. Land for Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is procured *as per* the policy and procedures of the respective State Governments. State Governments have been advised that in case of land acquisition for SEZs, first priority should be for acquisition of waste and barren land and if necessary single crop agricultural land could be acquired for the SEZs. If perforce a portion of double cropped agricultural land has to be acquired to meet the minimum area requirements, especially for multi-product SEZs, the same should not exceed 10% of the total land required for the SEZ. The Board of Approval on SEZs only considers those proposals, which have been duly recommended by the State Government. Further, pursuant to the decision of Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) in its meeting held on 5th April, 2007, the State Governments have been informed on 15th June, 2007 that the Board of Approval will not approve any SEZs where the State Governments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April, 2007.

Job losses in export oriented units

421. SHRI D. RAJA:
SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:
Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our exports have continued to drop for the seventh month in a row by as much as 33.2 per cent in April compared with the previous year;

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been large scale retrenchment in most of the export-oriented sectors such as textiles, gems and jewellery which are labour intensive sectors; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof and what steps are being taken to prevent large scale job losses in such sectors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Exports have shown a declining trend since October, 2008 and *as per* the quick estimates compiled by DGCI&S, merchandise exports in April, 2009 was US $ 10.743 Billion as compared to US $ 16.076 billion in the corresponding period previous year, thereby showing a decline of 33.2%.